

1 (Currently amended). Retainer apparatus for holding conduits in a trench having a bottom and a pair of sides comprising in combination:

a center bridge portion to be disposed against the conduits in the trench [[, and]]

;

a pair of end plates secured to the center bridge portion and disposed against the sides of the trench [[.]]; and

a boss on each end plate extending outwardly from the end plates for receiving the bridge.

2 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1 in which the end plates include means for securing the end plates to the sides of the trench.

3 (Original). The apparatus of claim 2 in which the means for securing the end plates to the sides of the trench include barbs extending outwardly and upwardly from the end plates.

4 (Currently amended). The apparatus of claim [[2]] 3 in which the barbs extend generally outwardly and upwardly from the end plates.

5 (Original). The apparatus of claim 3 in which the barbs are in the configuration of louvers.

6 (Original). The apparatus of claim 5 in which the barbs are disposed generally parallel to each other.

7(Canceled).

8 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1 in which the end plates are generally of a rectangular configuration.

9 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1 in which the end plates include apertures.

10 (Original). The apparatus of claim 9 which includes spikes extending through the apertures for anchoring the end plates in non-cohesive soil.

11 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1 in which the center bridge portion comprises a single member.

12 (Original). The apparatus of claim 11 in which the center bridge portion has a generally circular cross section.

13(Canceled).

14 (Canceled).

15(Canceled).

16 (Canceled).

17(Canceled).

18(Canceled).

19(Canceled).

20(Canceled).

21(Canceled).

22(Canceled).

23(Original). The apparatus of claim 2 in which the trench includes non-cohesive soil and the means for securing the pair of end plates to the sides of the trench includes apertures in the end plates and relatively long fastening elements extending through the apertures and into the non-cohesive soil.

24(Canceled).

25(Canceled).

26(Canceled).

27(Canceled).

28(Canceled).

29(Canceled).

30(Canceled).

31(Canceled).

32(Canceled).

33(Canceled).

34 (New). End plate apparatus to be secured to a wall of a trench for retaining at least a single conduit in the trench comprising in combination:

an end plate;

a boss extending outwardly from the end plate and adapted to receive a bridge element to be disposed on at least the single conduit disposed in the trench; and

means for securing the end plate to the wall of the trench.

35 (New). The apparatus of claim 34 in which the means for securing the end plate to the wall of the trench includes at least a single aperture extending through the end plate.

36 (New). The apparatus of claim 35 in which the means for securing the end plate to the wall of the trench further includes a nail extending through the aperture.

37 (New). The apparatus of claim 34 in which the means for securing the end plate to the wall of the trench includes at least a single barb element extending outwardly from the end plate opposite to the boss and adapted to extend into the wall of the trench.

38 (New). The apparatus of claim 37 in which the barb element is in the configuration of a louver.